

CLERK: LB 265, a bill introduced by Senator Withem. (Read title.) The bill was introduced on January 10, referred to Transportation, advanced to General File. I have no amendments to the bill, Madam President.

PRESIDENT ROBAK: The Chair recognizes Senator Withem.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Yes, Madam President, members of the body, two or three years ago the Legislature passed LB 453 which created the Information Technology Commission. The goal of that commission was to examine the variant aspects of telecommunications within our state. At that time, if you recall, people were starting to get on the bandwagon of lots of different telecommunications concepts. Internet was becoming popular, distance learning via ETV, a multitude of other things. We were concerned at that time that we might, as a state government and as a state, end up with a multitude of different processes going on, none of which would be able to fit within a unified statewide plan. So we passed a bill creating the Nebraska Information Technology Commission that was to be in existence until 1995. They have done their work. They have prepared a report and made a series of recommendations. Those rec...one of their recommendations back to the Legislature is that this commission would have another two years of existence so that there would be a group that would be monitoring the recommendations that they have made, not forcing implementation but at least being in a position where they could have some oversight, where they could continue to remind agencies of state government as to what their responsibilities might be in meeting the statewide technology plan. That's what this bill does, it extends their existence for another two years. Normally, I'm not excited about knocking off sunsets on bills and making agencies exist indefinitely, but I think they make a good case in this instance. We've all known of reports that have been done, studies that have been concluded, where as soon as the study is completed and the group that did the study goes away, individuals forget that recommendations have been made and the report just gathers dust on the shelf. The purpose of this would be to allow them to continue in existence for two more years and they would be able to at least continue to remind those individuals of their obligations to carry out this statewide plan. I would urge you to advance the bill.

SENATOR HALL PRESIDING